

**Message: Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom****Case Information:**

Message Type: Exchange  
Message Direction: External, Inbound  
Case: GOV\_10032017\_Search  
Capture Date: 10/3/2017 9:43:17 AM  
Item ID: 29387626  
Policy Action: Not Specified

**✉ Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom****From** Briden, Parker**Date**  
Thursday,  
April 13,  
2017 4:29  
PM**To****Cc****Bcc** GO.Governor'sOfficeStaff@state.mo.us;GO.CapitalPressCorps@state.mo.us;GO.STATEHOUSE@state.mo.us**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Parker Briden (573) 691-9237  
April 13, 2017

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Governor Greitens has instructed the Department of Natural Resources to allow religious organizations to apply for and be eligible to receive DNR grants. Now, religious organizations will have their applications judged on the merits like any other applicant. DNR will also update its application materials, so that religious organizations are no longer prohibited from applying.

The move is being praised by leaders in the faith community.

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Capture Date: 10/3/2017 9:43:20 AM  
Item ID: 29388015  
Policy Action: Not Specified

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***Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom***

Today, [Governor Greitens announced](#) that his administration is reversing policies that previously discriminated against religious organizations.

"Before we came into office, government bureaucrats were under orders to deny grants to people of faith who wanted to do things like make community playgrounds for kids... That's just wrong... We have hundreds of outstanding religious organizations all over the state of Missouri who are doing great work on behalf of kids and families every single day. We should be encouraging that work. So, today we are changing that prejudiced policy," said Greitens.

Before the Greitens administration took office, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) denied religious organizations access to multiple state grant programs, just because the organizations were religious.

Governor Greitens has instructed the Department of Natural Resources to allow religious organizations to apply for and be eligible to receive DNR grants. Now, religious organizations will have their applications judged on the merits like any other applicant. DNR will also update its application materials, so that religious organizations are no longer prohibited from applying.

The move is being praised by leaders in the faith community.

"We applaud the Governor's move to make sure these non-sectarian DNR grants and programs are available to all children without religious discrimination," said Mike Hoey, Executive Director of the Missouri Catholic Conference, the public policy agency for the Catholic Church in Missouri. "The education and safety of our children should be considered

foremost in these grant programs, not the type of school the children attend."

"Governor Greitens 'gets' what our Founding Fathers understood: that faith is an integral part of our national identity. There are common places where people of faith and state can work together to accomplish the common good such as safety, education, rehab, foster/orphan care, and other contexts where qualified religious organizations meet and, in most cases, exceed the state requirements," said Dr. John Yeats, Executive Director of the Missouri Baptist Convention.

"We applaud Governor Greitens for his actions today, which we believe will benefit all Missouri children, regardless of where they attend school. Like all Missourians, we want better and safer schools for our children. Through the implementation of this policy, the Governor is making that happen," said Daniel Lefton, President, Board of Trustees, Epstein Hebrew Academy.

Under the old policy, DNR denied a request from a preschool, owned by a Columbia church, for a Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant to replace its playground surface. The case, brought by Trinity Lutheran, is pending before the United States Supreme Court.

According to [The Washington Times](#), "A playground spat over surfacing made out of scrap tires is looming as a pivotal church-state separation case, one that religious freedom advocates say could provide relief from what they see as government hostility toward faith."

Today's action by Governor Greitens is not expected to affect the *Trinity Lutheran* case before the Supreme Court because that case involves a 2012 DNR decision that became final years before the Greitens administration took office. It does ensure that future groups will not be discriminated against based on religion again.

Under the previous administration, DNR required many grant applicants to certify that they were not religious organizations. For example, the previous Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant Application Form required applicants to certify that:

"The applicant is not owned or controlled by a church, sect, or denomination of religions and the grant would not directly aid any church, sect or denomination of religion."

Some religious organizations applied anyway. DNR denied grants to religious organization applicants in at least four different grant programs: Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant Program (playground surfaces); Bus Grant Program (school field trip transportation); Cost-Share Program (erosion control); and Solid Waste Management District Grants (recycling efforts).

In 2016, 65 schools applied to DNR to fund field trips to state parks. DNR granted 62 applications. The only three applications not granted came from religious schools: St. Joseph School in Westphalia, Christ Church Christian School in Warrensburg, and St. James Catholic School in Liberty. The last administration left these three applications pending. Governor Greitens has instructed DNR to move forward with these applications like any other.

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**Message: FW: Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom****Case Information:**

Message Type: Exchange  
Message Direction: External, Inbound  
Case: GOV\_10032017\_Search  
Capture Date: 10/3/2017 9:43:21 AM  
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Policy Action: Not Specified

**✉ FW: Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom**

**From** Smith, Justin                    **Date** Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:29 PM  
**To** Wheeler, Katie Jo;Lyskowski, Danny  
**Cc**

FYI.

**From:** Briden, Parker  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:29 PM  
**Subject:** Governor Greitens Announces New Policy to Defend Religious Freedom

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Message Type: Exchange  
Message Direction: External, Inbound  
Case: GOV\_10032017\_Search  
Capture Date: 10/3/2017 9:43:19 AM  
Item ID: 29387928  
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